

Friends of Holly Pond Minutes March 27, 2013

**Next Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2013, 7:00 pm
SoundWaters Coastal Center**

Participants:

More than 50 Darien and Stamford residents, staff and elected officials attended the first meeting to identify important issues, learn about the history and current status of funding and projects, and identify next steps to restore and protect the health and safety of Holly Pond. Elected officials included State Sen. Carlo Leone (Stamford and Darien) who spoke; State Rep. Dan Fox (Stamford); State Rep. William Tong (Stamford and Darien); State Rep. Terrie Wood (Darien and Norwalk); Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson and Darien Selectman John Lundeen. CT DEEP representatives were Peter Francis and Harry Yamalis, who spoke.

Major Issues:

A survey of everyone in attendance identified the following issues: Funding sources and status; dredging methods and status, including silt and levels of bottom contamination; water quality and testing for coliform levels; sewer line infrastructure and maintenance; dam maintenance and future plans; how to open up Requests for Proposals (RFP); Weed Avenue wall deterioration; low water levels; boat and swimming safety; protection as international flyway for birds; fish ladders, return of alewives and elimination of phragmites.

State Sen. Carlo Leone

Sen. Leone has been able to preserve \$480,000 for Holly Pond projects, however he emphasized that this is insufficient to complete large-scale efforts. He also noted that unless action is taken soon, the money for Holly Pond could be allocated for projects elsewhere in the state. He urged the group to reach consensus on a project, even if it's not exactly what everyone wants, as a way of demonstrating to the Legislature that Holly Pond has a constituency that is willing to work together. Implementation of smaller projects can be leveraged for further requests for both state and federal dollars.

Harry Yamalis, CT DEEP

A Request for Proposal (RFP) to create an analysis of a fish ladder at the dam is going out May 1. The joint project involves the CT DEEP, CT DOT, Stamford and Darien, with a state and federal funding match. The results of prior studies have had little follow-up because no money was available for implementation. There is a lack of clarity on this project and whether the community can now have a say in how this money will be spent.

Discussion

Despite the brevity of the meeting, there was time for discussion of the issues raised. This included:

- Questioning the funding of fish ladders, when the community focus is on the dam, dredging and water quality;
- Discussion about the need for water quality testing of Holly Pond;
- Frustration over the decades-long pattern of funding studies without significant follow up;
- Discussion of method of engaging outside firms, e.g. hiring or opening projects for bid;
- Raising the idea of inviting representatives of other successful projects (i.e. Gorham's Pond and the Mill River Collaborative) to share their experiences.

Next Steps

1) More Information

The following people agreed to take the lead in obtaining additional information on the following topics:

- Corporate Environmental Liability – Per Sekse
- Dam background, maintenance and future plans – Frank Kemp
- Dam structure as part of fish ladder project – Harry Yamalis
- Dredging – Jeff Bruno
- Funding, past, present and future – Susan Bruno
- Historical documents – Frank Kemp and Jayme Stevenson
- Tidal gates status – Jayme Stevenson
- Water Quality – Kim Kiner
- Water testing this summer – Jayme Stevenson, Darien and Karen Cammarota, Stamford
- Web repository for information - SoundWaters

2) Follow-Up Meeting

- Thursday, April 25, 2013, 7:00 pm, SoundWaters Coastal Center

3) Community Clean-up

- Saturday, May 18, 2013, 10 am – 1 pm
SoundWaters *Make a Difference Day*